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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to conscience protection for private child-placing agencies; amending s. 409.175, F.S.; prohibiting a private child-placing agency from being required to place or be involved in a placement that would violate the agency's religious or moral convictions; prohibiting the department from taking actions related to licensure based on the agency's objections to involvement in certain placements; prohibiting certain entities from denying grants, contracts, or participation in government programs to a private child-placing agency due to its objecting to involvement in certain placements; providing that refusal to be involved in such placements is not the basis of any claim for injunctive relief or damages; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (18) is added to section 409.175,

Florida Statutes, to read:

409.175 Licensure of family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public records exemption.—

(18) (a) No private child-placing agency shall be required to perform, assist in, recommend, consent to, or participate in any placement of a child when the proposed placement would

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violate the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.

- (b) The department may not deny an application for an initial license or renewal of a license, or revoke the license, of a private child-placing agency because of the agency's objection to performing, assisting in, recommending, consenting to, or participating in a placement of a child that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.
- (c) The state or a local government or community-based care lead agency may not deny a private child-placing agency any grant, contract, or participation in a government program because of the agency's objection to participating in a placement of a child that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies.
- (d) Refusal of a private child-placing agency to perform, assist in, recommend, consent to, or participate in a placement of a child that violates the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies shall not form the basis of any claim for injunctive relief or for damages.
 - Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.

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